

Application No. 09/989,516
Response to Office Action

R E M A R K S

The Examiner is thanked for conducting a telephone interview on June 2, 2004.

Independent claims 1 and 9 have been amended along the lines suggested by the Examiner on pages 10 and 11 of the Office Action and as discussed in the telephone interview conducted on June 2, 2004 to more clearly recite the patentably distinguishing features of the present invention.

In particular, claim 1 has been amended to clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the driving member is adapted to drive the aperture device to change the variable aperture value in both the ascending direction and in the descending direction while maintaining the desired focal length value.

Similarly, claim 9 has been amended to more clarify the feature of the present invention whereby the third cam portion is adapted to drive the aperture device to change the variable aperture value in both the ascending direction and in the descending direction while maintaining the desired focal length value.

It is respectfully submitted that amended independent claims 1 and 9 now clearly patentably distinguish over

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Kabe et al (USP 6,134,053), taken singly or in combination
with Hotta et al (USP 5,576,892), under 35 USC 102 as well as
under 35 USC 103.

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In view of the foregoing, entry of this Amendment, allowance
of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are
respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or
recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the
undersigned at the telephone number given below for prompt
action.

Respectfully submitted,


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